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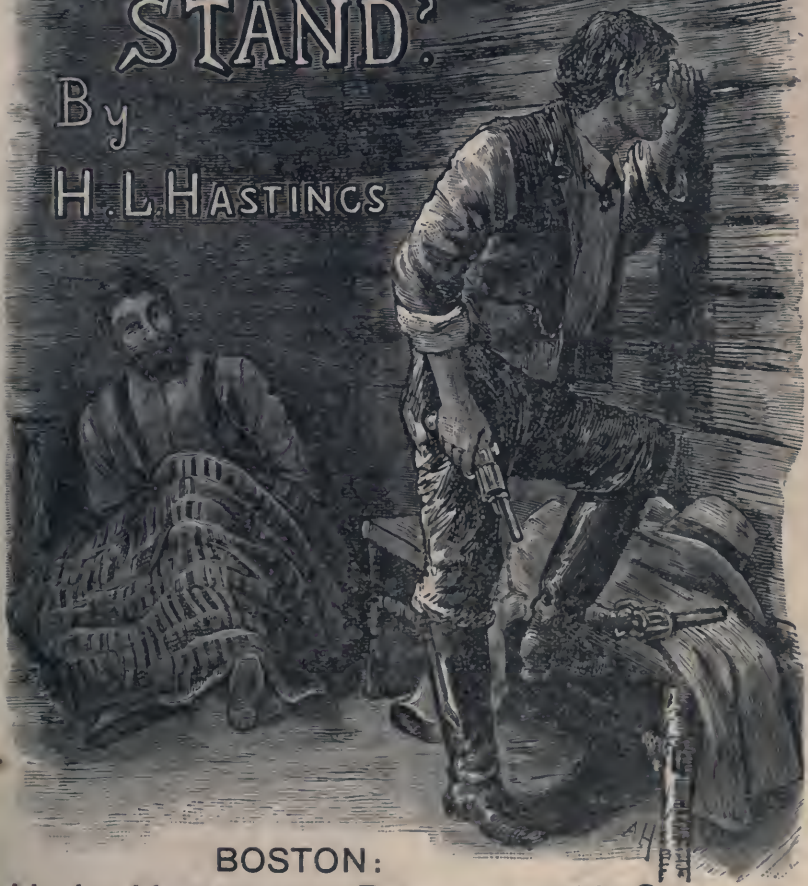
WILL THE OLD BOOK STAND?

By H. L. HASTINGS



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TESTIMONIAL.

The undersigned, being personally acquainted with the Anti-Infidel Lectures and Publications of Mr. H. L. Hastings, of Boston, Mass., and believing that their wide circulation is demanded by the increase of Skepticism and skeptical literature, and will tend to greatly benefit not only Skeptics, but also all Christians and churches which hold the common faith of Christ, do hereby most heartily commend his work to the confidence, encouragement, and support of all Christians and Philanthropists.

Signed by LORD KINNAIRD, LORD RADSTOCK, SIR ARTHUR BLACKWOOD, GEORGE WILLIAMS, EDMUND J. KENNEDY, T. W. STOUGHTON, SAMUEL SMITH, M. P., T. A. DENNY, S. GURNEY SHEPPARD, JOHN WILKINSON, IRA D. SANKEY, JOSEPH COOK, DONALD MATHESON, CANON WILBERFORCE, EDWARD WHITE, H. W. WEBB PEPLOE, DR. BARNARDO, REV. DRS. DONALD FRASER, E. W. BULLINGER, ADOLPH SAPHIR, JOSEPH PARKER, A. H. PLUMB, J. L. WITHROW, DANIEL DORCHESTER, E. F. BURR, JOSEPH CUMMINGS, G. F. PENTECOST, A. J. GORDON, L. B. BATES, A. T. PIERSON, J. B. DALES, GEO. J. MINGENS, W. T. MOORE, O. P. GIFFORD, AND OTHERS.

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The Inspiration of the Bible

A LECTURE by M. L. HASTINGS*

THE question as to the inspiration of the Bible is not a question raised by me. It is a question that is already up for discussion through the length and breadth of the land. What are we to do with the Bible? How are we to regard it? Is it the best book in the world, or the worst? Is it a true book, or is it a false book? Is it God's book, or is it man's book?

We find men on all sides of the question. There are persons who tell us this book is a good book—

*Delivered before the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Massachusetts Young Men's Christian Associations, at Spencer, Mass., U.S.A.

but then, there are others just as good. The Bible is inspired, and so was Plato inspired, so was Socrates, and so is the almanac inspired; in fact, everything is inspired—the book of Mormon, the Koran of Mahomet, the sacred books of the Hindoos and the Chinese;—they have their Bibles, you have yours; all are good, and one is about as good as the other. Shakespeare was inspired, Milton was inspired, Thomas Paine was inspired, and everything and everybody is inspired.

It is not worth while to waste time on false issues. When I open Shakespeare's plays I do not read at the commencement, "Thus saith the Lord God of hosts;" when I turn to Plato's writings I do not read, "Hear ye the word of the Lord;" when I peruse the almanac I do not read, "The word of the Lord came unto me." Hence, you see that this book must be judged by a standard different from all other books. Over and over again this book says, "Hear ye the word of the Lord." Now, the message *is* the word of the Lord, or it is a lie. It is the word of the Lord, as it professes to be, or it is a cheat, a swindle, a humbug, a fraud.

To illustrate: A man tells me that Jesus of Nazareth was a good man; but then, there were other men just as good. He was a spiritual medium; but there are other mediums equally powerful in these days. To be sure, I do not remember any spiritual medium giving a public dinner, for nothing, to five thousand hungry people! You may have heard of such a "manifestation," but it has not fallen under my notice. I have not heard of a spiritual medium hushing the winds or calming a storm at sea. I *have* heard of dancing tables and similar operations. I prefer to have my tables *stand still!*

But while *you say*, "Christ was simply one of many remarkable men," *He* says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." *He* says, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which *I had with thee before the world was.*" Now do you say he was a good man, and yet he *told lies?* What is your idea of a good man? I do not believe that a good man lies; and I do not believe that a man who lies *is* a good man. Perhaps *you* do, but if so, you were brought up in a different way from that in which my father brought me up. So I do not believe that a book packed with lies from one end to the other is a good book; and I do not want anyone to come and tell me that Jesus Christ was a good man, and the Bible is a good book, but neither of them tell the truth. I join issue there. This book is what it

professes to be, or it is a swindle; Jesus of Nazareth was what he professed to be, or he was an impostor.

Suppose a man comes to town and represents himself as the son of a British nobleman. He is well dressed, has plenty of money, turns the heads of half the young ladies in the town, and makes himself at home generally; but after a while they find out that he is the son of "Old Jinkins, the blacksmith," down in the next town. Now I do not want you to tell me how prettily he behaves, what fine broadcloth he wears, or what a perfect gentleman he is in all his deportment. The fact is, he is a liar, a fraud, and a scamp. He has come under false colours, and palmed himself off on the community under false pretences; and the more good things you say about him the less I think of him; because, if he is such a well-educated gentleman, he knows better than to be going around as a fraud, and deceiving the people. So we must accept Jesus of Nazareth and his claims entirely, or else we must reject the whole gospel as an imposture, and as the grandest, most stupendous fraud the world has ever known.

Now, do not be fooled by this soft talk about the Bible being "a good book," and yet just like many other good books. There is not another like it in the world. Let us look at some of its peculiarities:—

Here is one: The Bible is a book which has been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you ever heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this book; and it is like upsetting a solid cube of granite. It is just as big one way as the other; and when you have upset it, it is right side up, and when you overturn it again it is right side up still. Every little while somebody blows up the Bible; but when it comes down it always lights on its feet, and runs faster than ever through the world. They overthrew the Bible a century ago, in Voltaire's time—entirely demolished the whole thing. In less than a hundred years, said Voltaire, Christianity will have been swept from existence, and will have passed into history. Infidelity ran riot through France, red-handed and impious. A century has passed away. Voltaire has "passed into history," and not very respectable history either; but his old printing-press, it is said, has since been used to print the Word of God; and the very house where he lived is packed with Bibles, a depôt for the Geneva Bible Society. Thomas Paine demolished the Bible, and finished it off finally; but after he had

* Some interesting facts on this subject may be seen in a lecture by H. L. Hastings, entitled *Is the Bible a True Book?*

crawled despairingly into a drunkard's grave in 1809,* the book took such a leap that since that time more than twenty times as many Bibles have been made and scattered through the world as ever were made before, since the creation of man. Up to the year 1800, from four to six million copies of the Scriptures, in some thirty different languages, comprised all that had been produced since the world began. Eighty years later, in 1880, the statistics of eighty different Bible societies which are now in existence, with their unnumbered agencies and auxiliaries, report more than 165,000,000 Bibles, Testaments, and portions of Scripture, with two hundred and six *new* translations, distributed by Bible societies alone since 1804; to say nothing of the unknown millions of Bibles and Testaments which have been issued and circulated by private publishers throughout the world. For a book that has been exploded so many times, this book still shows signs of considerable life.

I have heard of a man travelling around the country exploding this book, and showing up "the mistakes of Moses," at about two hundred dollars a night. It is easy work to abuse Moses at two hundred dollars a night, especially as Moses is dead, and cannot talk back. It would be worth something after hearing the infidel on "the mistakes of Moses," to hear Moses on "the mistakes of the infidel."† When Moses could talk back, he was rather a difficult man to deal with. Pharaoh tried it, and met with poor success. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and it is said found a grave in the Red Sea. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram tried it, and went down so deep that they have not yet got back. But

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* There lies before me a letter written to me by Mrs. Mary Benjamin, who at the age of eleven years was an *eye-witness* to the death-bed agonies of Thomas Paine. She writes from Williamsport, Pa., April 25, 1876:—

"I was invited by a distant connection . . . to go and see T. Paine on his death-bed. . . . The scene to me was appalling, and I wished to leave at once. I remember him as he lay, his head near and close to the door we entered, his glaring, rolling eyes, uttering imprecations, apparently in agony of body and mind, his screams could be heard at a great distance. As I shrank back they said (there were many there) he called on Jesus Christ for mercy, and not to blaspheme."

This independent witness simply confirms the testimony of other respectable persons, whose veracity is only impeached by infidels who were not present, and who know nothing of the facts, but who, with characteristic candour, expect us to believe their testimony concerning events which occurred years before they were born!

† See three pamphlets by H. L. Hastings, entitled, *Remarks on the 'Mistakes of Moses,' The Wonderful Law, The Separated Nation*, and *Israel's Greatest Prophet;* to be had of the publishers of this lecture.

now Moses is dead, and it is easy to abuse him. It does not take a very brave beast to kick a dead lion.*

But, after all, this book seems to stand abuse, and thrive upon refutation. A few months ago some learned men, after working for a number of years on the revision of the New Testament, finished their work. Having inserted a few modern words instead of others which had become obsolete, made some slight corrections of errors in translation, and rectified from ancient manuscripts some little errors that had been made by copyists in transcribing the New Testament,† at last the book was announced as ready to be issued on a certain day. What was the result? Why, men offered five hundred dollars to get a copy of that book a little in advance of its publication; and the morning it was published, the streets of New York were blockaded with express waggons backed up and waiting for copies of a book which had been refuted, exploded, and dead and buried for so many years. Millions of copies were sold as fast as they could be delivered. They telegraphed that book, from the first of Matthew to the end of Romans from New York to Chicago, about 118,000 words—the longest message ever wired—for the sake of getting it there twenty-four hours sooner than steam could carry it, to print in the Sunday newspapers.

A dead book, is it? They would not pay for telegraphing the greatest infidel speech ever delivered in this country, from here to Tophet. This old book seems to show some signs of life yet. It is like Aaron's rod that budded and blossomed, and it is being scattered all over the world.

This book outlives its foes. If you could gather all the books written against it, you could build a pyramid higher than the loftiest spire. Now and then a man goes to work to refute the Bible; and every time it is done it has to be done over again the next day or the next year. And then, after its enemies have done

* It would be interesting to hear a military leader and legislator, like "Moses the man of God," who, after he was *eighty years old*, commanded for forty years an army of six hundred thousand men, emancipating, organizing, and giving laws to a nation which has maintained its existence for more than thirty stormy centuries, give his candid opinion concerning "the mistakes" of a "Colonel" of cavalry, whose military career is said to have included one single engagement, in which "he was chased into a hog-yard and surrendered to a boy of sixteen;" after which, as soon as exchanged, he heroically resigned his commission in the face of the enemy, subsequently turning his attention to managing swindling whiskey rings, discussing theology, defending scoundrels, blaspheming God, and criticising dead men who cannot answer him.

† For an account of these errors and their extent and importance, see *The Corruptions of the New Testament*, by H. L. Hastings.

their worst, some of its professed friends torture and twist and mystify and misrepresent it. Surely it is no fool of a book if it lives through all that. Infidels have been at work nearly eighteen hundred years, firing away at it, and making about as much impression on it as you would shooting boiled peas at Gibraltar.

The fact is, this book has come into the world, and it seems to have come to stay. It is in the world, and I do not know how you are to get it out. One hundred years ago you might have found that book in twenty or thirty translations; but now you can find it in between two and three hundred different versions, most of which have been made in this last progressive, intellectual, nineteenth century. All over the globe it goes; touch any shore and you will find that book there before you.

And it is a curious fact that most of our sceptical friends contrive to keep very close to where its shadow falls. It does not take a great while to get out of sight of the Bible. You can go, in a very few days, where there are no churches, Sunday schools, Young Men's Christian Associations, preachers, deacons, or anything else of the kind—you can "go West." There is little difficulty in getting beyond the reach of the Bible. Your scalp might not be very safe, but you can easily get away from the reach of the Bible. But the infidel, while finding fault with the Bible, takes good care to stay where the Bible is. Why is this?

There was once a vessel wrecked on one of the South Sea Islands. There was on board a sailor who had been there before, and who knew that the people were cannibals. And when the ship was wrecked, and they were cast away on this shore, they knew there was no hope for them, for they saw no way to escape. The sailor, however, climbed up on a hill-top to reconnoitre a little. Presently his shipmates saw him swinging his arms in great excitement, and inquired what was the matter. He had seen just over the hill the *steeple of a meeting-house!* That was what took all the fear of trouble out of his soul. He knew that church spire made his neck safe on that cannibal island.

Now infidels know that fact just as well as he did. Years ago, a young infidel was travelling in the West with his uncle, a banker, and they were not a little anxious for their safety when they were forced to stop for a night in a rough wayside cabin. There were two rooms in the house; and when they retired for the night they agreed that the young man should sit with his pistols, and watch until midnight, and then awaken his uncle, who should watch until morning. Presently they peeped through the crack, and saw their host, a rough-looking old man, in his bear-skin suit,

reach up and take down a book—a Bible; and after reading it awhile, he knelt and began to pray; and then the young infidel began to pull off his coat and get ready for bed. The uncle said, "I thought you were going to sit up and watch." But the young man knew there was no need of sitting up, pistol in hand, to watch all night long in a cabin that was hallowed by the word of God, and consecrated by the voice of prayer. Would a pack of cards, a rum-bottle, or a copy of the *Age of Reason*, have thus quieted this young infidel's fears? *(See Illustration on Cover.)*

Every one knows that where this book has influence it makes things safe. Why is this? If it were a bad book, we should expect to find it in the hands of the worst men. In New York there was once a kind of rogue's museum—a place where they had all kinds of skeleton-keys, and jemmies, and brass knuckles, and dirks, and pistols, and implements of mischief, which they had taken away from roughs and criminals. Do you suppose there was a single New Testament in the whole kit? Why not? If it were a bad book you would expect a man to have a revolver in one pocket, and a New Testament tucked away in another. There was a row the other night, and a man broke his wife's head with a —Bible? No! it was a *Bottle!* Where the Bible bears sway, the rows and quarrels do not come.

What makes this book so different from all other books? Whose book is it? Who made it? Infidels have the strangest ideas on that subject. I recollect in Marlboro', Mass., I read in a newspaper an article written by an infidel, which stated that the Council of Nice, in the year 325, compiled the New Testament. They had a lot of Gospels and Epistles, genuine and spurious, and no one could distinguish between the two; so they put them all on the floor, and prayed that the good ones might get up on the communion table and the bad ones stay on the floor; and that was the way that the present New Testament was compiled. And that is the kind of food that infidels are made to swallow and digest; for that very statement can be found in various infidel books now issued by infidel publishers. This writer said that this account rested on the authority of Papias, an early Christian bishop. I replied, in a lecture, that there was one difficulty about that story—that Papias was dead and buried a hundred and fifty years before the Council of Nice was held; but as they might have got the news from "the spirits," that might be no great objection to them. The man rose to explain, and said that this was not the right Papias, but that it was another Papias, "an obscure Christian bishop of the fourth century." I told him I

thought he was obscure; so obscure that no one ever heard of him before or since. On investigation it was learned that a German dominie, named John Pappus, preacher in Strasburg, and a professor at Münster, who died in 1610, discovered this story in an old Greek manuscript entitled "Synodikon," which was written by some old romancer back in the dark ages, about the year 900, for it relates things which occurred as late as 879, over five hundred years after the Council of Nice was dead and buried. And this story, written nobody knows when, where, or by whom, has been swallowed, believed, and published by infidels far and near, as an account of the origin of the New Testament; and the men who believe and peddle such fables call Christians fools for believing the Bible.

I have on one of my library shelves, between twenty and thirty volumes, containing about twelve thousand pages of the writings of different Christian authors who wrote *before* A.D. 325, when the Council of Nice was held. Many of these books are full of Scripture. Those writers had the same books which we have; they quoted the same passages which we quote; they quoted from the same Gospels and Epistles from which we quote.

Origen, who wrote a hundred years before the Council of Nice, quotes 5,745 passages from all the books in the New Testament; Tertullian, A.D. 200, makes more than 3,000 quotations from the New Testament books; Clement, A.D. 194, quotes 380 passages; Irenæus, A.D. 178, quotes 767 passages; Polycarp, who was martyred A.D. 165, after having served Christ eighty-six years, in a single epistle quoted 36 passages; Justin Martyr, A.D. 140, also quotes from the New Testament; to say nothing of heathen and infidel writers like Celsus, A.D. 150, and Porphyry, A.D. 304, who referred to or quoted scores of the very passages now found in the Scriptures which we have. Indeed, Lord Hailes, of Scotland, having searched the writings of the Christian Fathers to the end of the third century, actually found the *whole of the New Testament*, with the exception of less than a dozen verses, scattered through their writings which are still extant; so that, if at the time of the Council of Nice every copy of the New Testament had been annihilated, the book could have been reproduced from the writings of the early Christian Fathers, who quoted the book as we quote it, and who *believed it as we believe it.* And now infidels talk about the Council of Nice getting up the New Testament. You might as well talk about the town council getting up the Revised Statutes of the state or nation, because they happened to say they accepted or received them. The Council of Nice did nothing of the kind. The books of the New Testament were

received from the apostles who wrote them, and were carefully preserved, and publicly read in the churches of Christ long before the Council of Nice was held.*

Says Tertullian, A.D. 200, "If you are willing to exercise your curiosity profitably in the business of your salvation, visit the apostolic churches; in which the very chairs of the apostles still preside in their places; in which their very *authentic letters are recited*, sounding forth the voice and representing the countenance of every one of them. Is Achaia near you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia you have Philippi and Thessalonica; if you can go to Asia you have Ephesus, but if you are near to Italy you have Rome."†

These apostolic churches received the Gospels at the hands of the men who wrote them; and the Epistles were written and signed by men whom they well knew. Paul wrote, "The salutation of me, Paul, by *mine own hand*, which is the *token in every epistle*."‡

Now, what did these writers testify? They testified things which they knew. The apostle John does not say, "That which we have dreamed, imagined, or guessed at, that thing do we declare unto you;" but, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life." 1 John i. 1. This was their testimony. They testified that they *saw* Christ in his life and in his death; that they saw him after his resurrection, and felt his hands and feet, and saw the nail-prints and the spear-wound; and they knew these things and testified of them, and they preached Christ, who had died and risen again.

When Lepaux, a member of the French Directory, complained to Talleyrand that his new religion, "Theophilanthropy," made little headway among the people, the shrewd old statesman replied:

"I am not surprised at the difficulty you find in your effort. It is no easy matter to introduce a new religion. But there is one thing I would advise you to do, and then, perhaps, you might succeed."—"What is it? what is it?" eagerly asked Lepaux. —"It is this," said Talleyrand; "go and be crucified, and then be buried, and then *rise again on the third day*, and then go on working miracles, raising the dead, and healing all manner of diseases, and casting out devils; and then it is possible that you may accomplish your end!" The philosopher went away silent; and no infidel has succeeded in fulfilling these conditions. But

* See *Who Made the New Testament?* † Tertul., *Against Heretics*, c. xxxvi.

‡ For a few overwhelming proofs of the authenticity of the books of the New Test., consult *The Corruptions of the New Testament*, by H. L. Hastings.

Christ has died, and has risen again, and these apostles suffered the loss of all things, and even of life itself, in proclaiming these facts; and they left their testimony on record in this Book. Then the apostles quote from the prophets, and the prophets quote from the Psalms, and refer to the Law which was given on Mount Sinai; and so we go back from book to book, until we reach the book of Genesis, and that does not quote from anybody or anything. You have then reached the fountain-head.

"But," says one, "I think that the Bible may be a true history, but that is no proof of its inspiration. It does not require divine inspiration to write a true history." So you think it an easy matter to tell the truth, do you? I wish you could make other people think so. Suppose you go and read a file of the newspapers published just before the last election, and see if you do not think it requires divine inspiration to tell the truth, or even to find it out after it is told. Truth is mighty hard to get at, as you can see by perusing the daily papers on the eve of an election.

There are certain things in the Bible which, to my mind, bear the impress of Divinity. A sceptic will tell you what a race of old sinners we read about in the Bible! Noah got drunk; David was guilty of adultery and murder; Solomon was an idolater, and wrought folly; Peter denied his Lord, and Judas sold him for thirty pieces of silver; all these people that the Bible talks to us so much about are a pretty set of men! Very well; what kind of men do you expect to read about in the Bible? Noah got drunk. Is that strange? Did no one else ever get drunk? Peter cursed and swore. Are there not other men who curse and swear? Judas, an apostle, sold his Lord, who said he had chosen twelve and one of them was a devil. Do you not sometimes find a Judas in the church even now-a-days? One in twelve was a thief and a traitor then; and we need not be surprised if we find about the same average now. But you seem to think that when you read about a man in the Bible he is sure to be free from all kinds of errors, frailties, faults, and sins. You have formed this idea of men from reading in Sunday-school books about good children, who usually die young; or perusing excellent biographies, which, as you read them, cause you to exclaim, "I wish I could be as good as that person was; but I never shall." No, I presume you never will and if you knew the whole story about the person you might not feel so deeply on the subject.

Do you suppose that if the Bible had been written by some learned doctor, revised by a committee of eminent divines, and published by some great religious society, we should ever have

heard of Noah's drunkenness, of Abraham's deception, of Lot's disgrace, of Jacob's cheating, of Paul and Barnabas' quarrelling, or of Peter's lying, cursing, or dissembling? Not at all. The good men, when they came to such an incident, would have said, "There is no use in saying anything about that. It is all past and gone; it will not help anything, and it will only hurt *the cause*." If a committee of such eminent divines had prepared the Bible, you would have had a biography of men whose characters were patterns of piety and propriety, instead of poor sinners, as they were. Sometimes a man writes his own diary and *happens* to leave it for some one to print after he is dead; but he leaves out all the mean tricks he ever did, and puts in all the good acts he can think of; and you read the pages, filled with astonishment, and think, "What a wonderfully good man he was!" But when the Almighty writes a man's life he tells the truth about him; and there are not many persons who would want their lives printed if the Almighty wrote them.

Suppose a young man goes, say from the country, down to the city. Perhaps he is a rich man's son, who has had more money than was good for him at home, and who comes to the city to see the sights. He sails around in dangerous waters, and slips into various ports that are not exactly safe, and the next morning finds him hauled up before His Honor in the police court. You get a morning paper, and you expect to find the full particulars of the case. You do, do you? You find a paragraph on this wise: "A certain young man from the rural districts came to town yesterday, sailed around in different parts of the city, and fell into rather bad company. This morning he was brought up before His Honor, who admonished him to be more careful in the future, and he departed a sadder and a wiser young man."* This is the kind of paragraph you will find in the papers when a rich man's son comes to the city, goes on a spree, and has his head smashed and his eye banged in a fight; you don't get many particulars. But if he is a poor vagabond, without a second shirt to his back, you can get his name, and perhaps his genealogy for generations, and all the particulars of his case. This is the way *men* write history; but when the Lord undertakes to tell *his* story of a sinful man, he does not select a poor, miserable beggar, and show him up; he does not give even the name of the thief on the cross, nor of the wretched outcast who bathed the Saviour's feet with her tears, nor of the guilty woman to whom he said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more;" but he takes King David from

* See Illustration on p. 17.

the throne, and sets him down in sackcloth and ashes, and wrings from his heart the cry, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." And then when he is pardoned, forgiven, cleansed, and made whiter than snow, the pen of inspiration writes down the whole dark, damning record of his crimes, and the king on his throne has not power, nor wealth, nor influence enough to blot the page; and it goes into history for infidels to scoff at for three thousand years. Who wrote that?

You find a man who will tell the truth about kings, warriors, princes, and rulers to-day, and you may be quite sure that he has within him the power of the Holy Ghost. And a book which tells the faults of those who wrote it, and which tells you that "there is none righteous, no, not one," bears in it the marks of a true book; for we all know that men have faults, and failings, and sins; and among all the men whose lives are recorded in that book, each man has some defect, some blot, except one, "the man Christ Jesus."

Now we have to discuss this subject from all points of view, but mainly from the direction of objections. Men love objections; and so they say there are difficulties, and absurdities, and errors, and contradictions in the Bible. You have all heard such assertions. After speaking once in the city of Boston, an ex-minister came to me and told me that the Bible was not true, for there was that story which Moses told about the quails. Israel lusted after flesh, and the Lord sent them quails to eat, and they fell by the camp a day's journey on each side, or over a territory forty miles across, and they were two cubits *deep* on the ground, and the Israelites ate them for a full month. I have in my possession an infidel paper which was published in Boston, in which there is about a column of arguments and figures on this "quail story;" giving an estimate of the number of bushels of quails that were piled up over the country, and showing that when they were divided among the people, each one would have 2,888,643 bushels of quails, which they were to eat during the month; giving each poor Israelite 69,620 bushels of quails to eat at each meal for thirty days, and therefore the Bible was not true! That is the meat on which these sceptical Cæsars grow so wondrous great.

I said to this gentleman, "The Bible does not say any such thing!" He replied that it certainly did; but I answered that it did not say any such thing. He insisted that it did. "Well," said I, "find it!" And when you ask an infidel to *find* anything in the Bible, you generally have him. He could not find the place; so I turned over to the eleventh chapter of Numbers, and

there read that instead of the birds being packed like cord-wood on the ground, three feet *deep*, the account says that the Lord brought the quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were "two cubits *high*," or about three feet *high* upon, or *above* the face of the earth. That is, instead of flying overhead and out of reach, they were brought in about three feet *high*, where any one could take as many of them as he chose.* And this sceptical friend had got the birds packed solid, three feet deep, over a territory forty miles across. As if I should say that a flock of wild geese flew as high as a church spire, and some one should insist that they were *packed solid* from the ground up, a hundred feet high! This is a sample of the kind of arguments infidels bring to prove that the Bible is not true!

The book, to my mind, bears the marks of inspiration in the foresight which it exhibits. This book foretells things. You cannot do that. You cannot tell what will be next year, or next week. "The spirits" cannot tell who will be the next president, or governor, or emperor. They may tell a great many things which are *past*. They may tell you who your grandmother was, and may copy the inscription on your grandfather's grave-stone, and may tell things which are written in the family record. They may reveal many things in the past—for the devil knows about the past—but they cannot foretell the future. I did hear of one spiritual medium who foretold her own death, and she died within a few hours; but when they got the stomach-pump, they pumped out of her stomach poison enough to kill two or three. That kind of prophecy requires no omniscient foresight.

Years ago I talked with an infidel in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and he wanted me to give him some evidence that the Bible was true. After some conversation, I loaned him a little volume, an abridgement of *Keith on Prophecy*. Some ten years after, as I took my seat in a railway train, he came and sat down beside me and began to talk, and he said: "If *you* want that book you can have it; but no one else can have it at any price." It had knocked his infidelity into atoms, and he was a believer in Christ, and a member of the church.

* The Hebrew word *al*, rendered upon, Num. xi. 31, signifies *above* or *over*, as well as *upon*; and it is applied to the flight of birds, "fowl that may fly *above* the earth" (Gen. i. 20); "a wind to pass *over* the earth" (Gen. viii. 1); "The curse that goeth forth *over* the face of the earth" (Zech. v. 3); "Darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved *upon* the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2). The *Septuagint* renders it by *epo*, "*from* the earth;" and the Douai version gives the true sense thus: "They flew in the air two cubits *high* above the ground."

The revelations of prophecy are facts which exhibit the divine omniscience. So long as Babylon is in heaps; so long as Nineveh lies empty, void, and waste; so long as Egypt is the basest of kingdoms; so long as Tyre is a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; so long as Israel is scattered among all nations; so long as Jerusalem is trodden under foot of the Gentiles; so long as the great empires of the world march on in their predicted course,—so long we have proof that one Omniscient Mind dictated the predictions of that book, and "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man." *

We call this Bible a book; but here are sixty-six different books, written by thirty or forty different men. A man may say, "I do not believe in the book of Esther." Well, what of that? We have sixty-five others left. What will you do with them? A man says, "I find fault with this chapter, or with that." Suppose you do? If you were on trial for murder, and had sixty-six witnesses against you, suppose you impeach one of them, there are sixty-five left; impeach another, and you still have sixty-four; impeach another, and you have sixty-three—surely enough to hang you if you are guilty. Do you not see that you cannot impeach this book unless you do it in detail? Each book bears its own witness, and stands by itself on its own merits; and yet each book is linked with all the rest. Blot out one, if you can. I am inclined to think it would be difficult to do this. This book seems built to stay together; it is inspired by one Spirit.

The authorship of this book is wonderful. Here are words written by kings, by emperors, by princes, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fishermen, by statesmen; by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, trained up at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, in shepherds' tents, in "green pastures" and beside "still waters." Among its authors we find the tax-gatherer, the herdsman, the gatherer of sycamore fruit; we find poor men, rich men, statesmen, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges; men of every grade and class are represented in this wonderful volume, which is in reality a *library*, filled with history, genealogy, ethnology, law, ethics, prophecy, poetry, eloquence, medicine, sanitary science, political economy, and perfect rules for the conduct of personal and social life. It contains all kinds of writing; but what a jumble it would be if sixty-six books were written in this way by ordinary men.

* Jer. li. 37; Ezek. xxix. 15; Ezek. xxvi. 5; Deut. xxviii. 64; 2 Peter i. 21.

"He departed
a sadder and wiser young man"

Suppose, for instance, that we get sixty-six medical books written by thirty or forty different doctors of various schools, believers in allopathy, homœopathy, hydropathy, and all the other "pathies," bind them all together, and then undertake to doctor a man according to that book! What man would be fool enough to risk the results of practising such a system of medicine? Or suppose you get thirty-five editors at work writing treatises on politics, or thirty-five ministers writing books on theology, and then see if you can find any leather strong enough to hold the books together when they are done.

But again, it required fifteen hundred years to write this book, and the man who wrote the closing pages of it had no communication with the man who commenced it. How did these men, writing independently, produce such a book? Other books get out of date when they are ten or twenty years old: but this book lives on through the ages, and keeps abreast of the mightiest thought and intellect of every age.

Suppose that thirty or forty men should walk in through that door. One man comes from Maine, another from New Hampshire, another from Massachusetts, and so on from each state, each bearing a block of marble of peculiar shape. Suppose I pile up these blocks in order, until I have the figure of a man, perfectly symmetrical and beautifully chiselled, and I say, "How did these men, who have never seen each other, chisel out that beautiful statue?" You say, "That is easily explained. One man planned that whole statue, made the patterns, gave the directions, and distributed them around; and so, each man working by the pattern, the work fits accurately when completed." Very well. Here is a book coming from all quarters, written by men of all classes, scattered through a period of fifteen hundred years; and yet this book is fitted together as a wondrous and harmonious whole. How was it done? "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." One mind inspires the whole book, one voice speaks in it all, and it is the voice of God speaking with resurrection power.

Again, I conclude that this book has in it the very breath of God, from the effect that it produces upon men. There are men who study philosophy, astronomy, geology, geography, and mathematics; but did you ever hear a man say, "I was an outcast, a wretched inebriate, a disgrace to my race, and a nuisance in the world, until I began to study mathematics, and learned the multiplication table, and then turned my attention to geology, got me a little hammer, and knocked off the corners of the rocks and

studied the formation of the earth, and since that time I have been happy as the day is long; I feel like singing all the time; my soul is full of triumph and peace; and health and blessing have come to my desolate home once more?" Did you ever hear a man ascribe his redemption and salvation from intemperance and sin and vice to the multiplication table, or the science of mathematics or geology? But I can bring you, not one man, or two, or ten, but men by the thousand who will tell you, "I was wretched; I was lost; I broke my poor old mother's heart; I beggared my family; my wife was heart-stricken and dejected; my children fled from the sound of their father's footsteps; I was ruined, reckless, helpless, homeless, hopeless, until I heard the words of that Book!" And he will tell you the very word which fastened on his soul. It may be it was "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" perhaps it was, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" it may have been, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He can tell you the very word that saved his soul. And since that word entered his heart, he will tell you that hope has dawned upon his vision; that joy has inspired his heart; and that his mouth is filled with grateful song. He will tell you that the blush of health has come back to his poor wife's faded cheek; that the old hats have vanished from the windows of his desolate home; that his rags have been exchanged for good clothes; that his children run to meet him when he comes; that there is bread on his table, fire on his hearth, and comfort in his dwelling. He will tell you all that, and he will tell you that this Book has wrought the change.

Now this book is working just such miracles, and is doing it every day. If you have any other book that will do such work as this, bring it along. The work needs to be done; if you have any other book that will do it, for Heaven's sake bring it out. But for the present, while we are waiting for you, as we know this book *will* do the work, we mean to use it until we can get something better.

What we most need is the book itself. It is its own best witness and defender. Christians sometimes try to defend the word of God. It seems like half a dozen poodle dogs trying to defend a lion in his cage. The best thing for us to do is to slip the bars and let the lion out, and he will defend himself! And the best thing for us to do is to bring out the word of God, and let "the sword of the Spirit" prove its own power, as it pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.

Suppose, for example, all the good people of this town should try the Bible, say for a single year. Suppose you start to-night, and say, "We have heard about that book, and now we will begin and practise its teachings just one year." What would be the result? There would be no lying, no stealing, no selling rum, no getting drunk, no tattling, no mischief-making, no gossiping, no vice nor debauchery. Every man would be a good man, every woman a good woman; every man would be a good husband, father, or brother; every woman a good wife, mother, or sister; every one in the community would be peaceable; there would be no brawls, no quarrels, no fights, no lawsuits; lawyers would almost starve to death; doctors would have light practice, and plenty of time to hoe in their gardens; courts would be useless, jails and lock-ups empty, almshouses cleared out of their inmates, except a few old stagers left over from the past generation; taxes would be reduced, hard times would trouble nobody,—all would be well dressed and well cared for; and presently the news would go abroad, and we should hear in Boston, "What wonderful times they are having up there in old Spencer. The people have all gone to living according to the Bible." The news would get into all the local papers, the Springfield papers, the Boston papers, the New York papers; the telegraph wires would be kept busy with the news; they would hear of it in Cleveland, in Cincinnati, in Chicago, in St. Louis, in New Bedford, and Fall River, and Portland; and the reporters would start off to investigate. One would be inquiring, "Are there any houses to let in Spencer? any to sell? any building lots? any farms for sale?" Capitalists would come here; some man from Boston would say, "I am going to move to Spencer; I am sick of the noise and hurry of the city, and I want a place where I can bring up my children, and not have them go to perdition;" there would be a general rush from all quarters to Spencer. It would raise the price of real estate twenty-five per cent. in six months; taxes would come down, property would go up, and good people from far and near would want to move into town, and nobody who was worth having there would want to move out. And this would be the direct result of reading and *obeying this book*. Now, if a book will do that for a community, what kind of a book is it? Is such a book the Lord's book or the devil's book? It seems to me that a book which will do such work as that must be inspired by the very breath of the Almighty.

The book is its own witness. It bears its own fruits and tells its own story. The great trouble with us is, we do not read this book, we do not use it, we do not understand it. It is a sorrowful

tact that you can hardly go into a prayer-meeting but you are likely to hear a quotation for Scripture that is not in the Bible and never was. You may hear, "In the midst of life we are in death," from the prayer-book, "He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," from an old romance; "God unchangeably ordains whatsoever comes to pass," from the Catechism; accompanied by passages misquoted, misunderstood, and misapplied, which show that the people do not read their Bibles, and do not understand them: and the worst thing about it is, one-half the people who go to meeting do not seem to know the difference. We need to *read* the Bible, to search it, study it, believe it, and obey it, and we shall find that it is filled with sanctifying power to our own souls, and that it is the word of salvation to the lost and perishing.

But says one, "I do not understand the Bible. I read it, but I cannot make anything of it. Somehow it is obscure, and my mind does not take hold of it." How do you read your Bible? "Oh, I read a chapter now and then; I read it here and there."

Suppose your boy comes home from school and says, "I can't make anything of this arithmetic; it is all dark to me." You say to him, "How did you study it?" "Oh, I read a little at the beginning, and then I turned to the middle and read a little here and there, and skipped backward and forward. But I don't understand it; I can't see into it."

You say to him, "My son, that is not the way to understand arithmetic. You must begin at the beginning, with the simplest elements, master every principle, learn every rule, solve every problem, and perform every example, and then the whole book will open to you as you go on."

When you read a novel do you begin in the middle, and read a page here and a line there, and skip about hither and thither, and say, "I can't make anything of this book?" No; you begin at the beginning, where "A solitary horseman was seen one dark, tempestuous night, riding along upon the margin of a swollen stream which wound about the base of a lofty mountain, on which stood an ancient castle," etc., etc. There is where you begin; and then you read every line and every page of the book until you get to the end. Sometimes they print a column or two of a story in a paper, and go and scatter it through the town, and at the end of it you will read, "The remainder of this thrilling story will be found in the columns of the *Weekly Blazing Comet;*" and then you start off down to the news-room and buy the *Blazing Comet* to find out how the story ends! Why will you not take the Bible and read it in the same way? Why will you not give as much

attention to the faithful words of the living God as you will to a pack of lies spun out by some sinful man? Why will you not take the Bible and read it from beginning to end, and *see how it comes out?* You will find it the grandest and most thrilling story the world has ever known. Sometimes, when you have not time to read a novel through, you read the first chapter or two, to find out who the hero is, and then skim through the pages and read the closing chapters and find out who was murdered, who was hung, and who was married; and then you can guess the rest, for there is usually about so much sawdust put in the middle for stuffing. Why will you not do as much as this for the Bible? Begin at the beginning, and read until you find out who is the hero of the story. You will find that the presence of one Person pervades the whole book. If you go into a British navy-yard, or on board a British vessel, and pick up a piece of rope, you will find that there is one little red thread which runs through the whole of it—through every foot of cordage which belongs to the British government—so, if a piece of rope is stolen, it may be cut into inch pieces, but every piece has the mark which tells where it belongs. It is so with the Bible. You may separate it into a thousand parts, and yet you will find one thought—one great fact running through the whole of it. You will find it constantly pointing and referring to one great Personage—"the Seed of the woman" that shall crush the serpent's head; "the Seed of Abraham," in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; "the Seed of David," who shall sit on David's throne and reign for evermore; the despised and rejected Sufferer, the Man of Sorrows, the Christ of God, born in Bethlehem, crucified on Calvary, rising triumphant from Joseph's tomb, ascending to sit at God's right hand, and coming again to judge the world and reign as King and Lord of all for ever. Around this one mighty Personage this whole book revolves. "To him give all the prophets witness;" and this book, which predicts his coming in its earliest pages, which foreshadows his person and his ministry through all its observances, types, and sacred prophecies, reveals in its closing lines the eternal splendours which shall crown and consummate his mighty work.

God's Word declares the end from the beginning. It is not only the chart which guides each weary wanderer to his own eternal rest, but it is the record of the great plan and purpose of the Almighty concerning the world which he has made, and the church which he has redeemed. It unfolds God's everlasting purpose, as manifested in Jesus Christ; and if one will read three chapters at the beginning of the Bible and three at the

end, he will be struck with the correspondence which there exists. At the beginning of the Bible we find a new world: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." At the end of the Bible we find a new world: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." At the beginning, we find Satan entering to deceive and destroy; at the end, we find Satan cast out, "that he should deceive the nations no more." At the beginning, sin and pain and sorrow and sighing and death find entrance to the world; at the end, there shall be no more pain nor sorrow nor sighing, and no more death. At the beginning, the earth, for man's transgression, is cursed with thorns and thistles; at the end, "there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.". At the beginning, we find the tree of life in paradise, from which the sinner is shut away by a flaming sword, lest he eat and live for ever; at the end, we find the tree of life again "in the midst of the paradise of God," and the blessed and the blood-washed ones have a right to the tree of life, and "enter in through the gates into the city." At the beginning, man was brought beneath the dominion of death and the grave; at the end, "the dead, small and great, stand before God," the sea gives up its dead, and death and hell are cast into the lake of fire. At the beginning, the first Adam lost his dominion over earth, and was driven out of the garden of Eden in shame and sorrow; at the end, we find the second Adam, victorious over sin and death and hell, enthroned as King and Lord of all, and reigning in triumph and glory for ever.

Now, when you get the plan of this book, you find that it is something more than a book of detached sentences, good maxims and comforting words. It is a book which unfolds the divine purpose, and not only reveals the way of salvation, but marks the pathway of the people of God through this wilderness, and foreshows the destiny of the world which he has made and the church which he has redeemed.

When we look at these facts we see that this is no man's book. When Columbus saw the river Orinoco, some one said he had discovered an island. He replied: "No such river as that flows from an island. That mighty torrent must drain the waters of a continent." So this book comes, not from the empty hearts of impostors, liars, and deceivers; it springs from the eternal depths of divine wisdom, love, and grace. It is the transcript of the divine mind, the unfolding of the divine purpose, the revelation of the divine will. God help us to receive it, to believe it, and be saved through Christ our Lord.

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H. L. Hastings of Boston, Mass., U. S. A., the author of this widely circulated lecture, which was pronounced by *Lord Shaftesbury* "one of the most valuable essays in modern times," has long been engaged in an *Anti-Infidel Crusade*. As early as 1852 he commenced delivering addresses upon Christian evidences, and against atheism, and has continued the work to the present time. In Jan., 1866, he issued the first number of THE CHRISTIAN, a pioneer in the field of unsectarian Christian periodical literature, and in the first number of this paper he commenced the issue of an anti-infidel tract, **Infidel Testimony to the Truth of the Scriptures.** In 1875 he started THE ARMORY, the only anti-infidel paper then known to him, which is still continued, monthly, in connection with THE CHRISTIAN. In 1882 he commenced the issue of the ANTI-INFIDEL LIBRARY, the first number of which was his lecture on **The Inspiration of the Bible.**

Besides the labor involved in issuing *five hundred tons* of anti-infidel and unsectarian gospel literature, and editing THE CHRISTIAN, the LITTLE CHRISTIAN, and THE ANTI-INFIDEL LIBRARY, Mr. Hastings has found time to travel annually many thousand miles, and deliver evangelistic and anti-infidel addresses in between twenty and thirty of the United States, and in the British Provinces; and has visited and lectured in England in 1875, in England and Scotland in 1881-2, in England and Ireland in 1886-7, and has published in Great Britain alone, since 1882, about a million of anti-infidel publications, aggregating some twenty tons weight of gospel literature, which has been scattered throughout Great Britain, and her dependencies.

Through the reading of these publications it is believed that many Christians have been strengthened in the faith, and many skeptics have been turned to know the Lord and believe his word. A curious commentary on the effect of Mr. Hastings' efforts put forth in Great Britain from the year 1882 onward, in conjunction with those of other Christian workers, is found in the statistics of the National Secular Organization, an Infidel Society, which, in 1883, claimed to have about a hundred branches and a large membership.—each of its members paying an entrance fee of four shillings, and receiving a certificate of his standing in that organization.

Year.	New Members.	Annual Loss.	*National Reformer.*
1883	1,883		June 8, 1883, p. 388
1884	1,747	Loss 141	June 8, 1884, p. 388
1885	1,367	" 478	May 31, 1885, p. 403
1886	988	" 379	June 20, 1886, p. 386
1887	505	" 483	June 5, 1887. p. 355
1888	593	Gain 88	May 27, 1888, p. 338
1889	492	Loss 101	June 16, 1889. p. 369

But the work is only begun. It is said there are between three and four hundred infidel societies in America. Infidel literature is scattered throughout Christendom and in heathen lands. Funds are greatly needed to extend this important work. Address letters, orders and donations to

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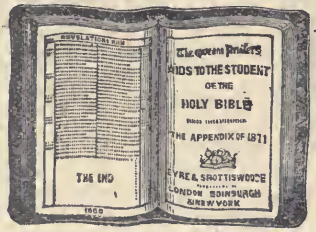

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